



SECOND WORKSHOP REPORT

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RESOURCES FOR CHANGE LTD



30th May 2024

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Surrey Nature Recovery – workshop 2 (Community) 3

 Purpose 3

 Principles / objectives 3

 Preparation/ homework 3

Event report 3

 What’s special about Surrey? Responses were: 3

 Surrey Nature Recovery – see Presentation (appendix) 3

 Q&A 3

Nature recovery idea generation by habitat (group activity)..... 4

 Heathland 4

 Parks, golf courses, school grounds, health, higher education, business and industrial estates 5

 Waterways and wetland 6

 Woodland 7

 Farmland including hedgerows and field margins 8

 Species rich grassland 9

Developing nature recovery outcomes (group activity) 10

 Topic: Increasing understanding of the social benefits of nature 10

 Topic: Educate people about/ Managing heathland (they don’t love it!) 11

 Reconciling food production and biodiversity 11

 Enhance the biodiversity of public estates 12

 Re-engineering waterways to slow flow and store water 12

 Connectivity of woodland 13

 Priorities 13

END MATTERS 14

 Evaluation 14

 Jargon 15

SURREY NATURE RECOVERY – WORKSHOP 2 (COMMUNITY)

Date: 30th May 2024

Venue: Merrist Wood College, Worplesdon, Guildford GU3 3PB

Facilitators: Resources for Change (R4C)

PURPOSE

To involve a group of stakeholders in learning about, deliberating, and identifying priority outcomes related to local nature recovery in the county.

PRINCIPLES / OBJECTIVES

- Participants learn about local nature recovery and establish common understanding.
- Participants work together to develop draft outcomes.
- Participants finalise and prioritise outcomes.

PREPARATION/ HOMEWORK

Participants that have not been to the webinars were asked to watch these back (there was a short recap at the beginning of the event).

EVENT REPORT

Following the welcome and introductions, participants were asked:

WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT SURREY? RESPONSES WERE:

- I can get on my bike and be in countryside in minutes
- Nature's resilience
- I live across the road from a lake - wildlife there. Watching it throughout the year.
- Access to nature is essential to wellbeing / mental health
- Free access to nature ie Commons
- Lots of different bits of habitat
- Hot spot for invertebrates - butterflies - special in the country
- On the downs. Rivers run to the south coast. A strategic connected county.
- Pressure because of where it sits. We can be a role model. Leading on engaging with development.
- A lot of groups with a passion for nature, biodiversity and projects for wildlife in gardens.

SURREY NATURE RECOVERY – SEE PRESENTATION (APPENDIX)

Q&A

Following the presentations, there was the opportunity to ask questions. These will be used to generate a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) page on the website:

Questions	Answers
How will you prioritise ?	In part based on mapping, availability of data and opportunities for nature recovery. Also access to nature for the population, particularly disadvantaged communities
If landowners can have their land removed from the map how can we ensure that they engage?	There are few incentives to being involved, involvement should mean that land identified for nature recovery can benefit from grants/ incentives
How are you engaging farmers?	2 workshops aimed at farming community, NFU & CLA involved
What areas can benefit	Areas of importance for biodiversity and opportunities for nature based solutions

NATURE RECOVERY IDEA GENERATION BY HABITAT (GROUP ACTIVITY).

Three groups undertook a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis each taking two topics. In the last few minutes they were asked to underline the most important factor (particularly but not exclusively from “opportunities”). The full results are set out below:

HEATHLAND

Strengths	Rare animals
	Rarity - highest area in the UK (lowland heathland) (13% of total)
	Extremely rare species including nightjar, Dartford warbler, woodlark, natterjack toads, newts and sand lizard
	European / International importance
	Importance as wildlife corridors
	WW2 - trained Canadian army, Italian POWs
Weaknesses	Fragmented
	Threat of extinction of species
	Need management / maintenance
	No animal particularly manages it [ie by grazing]
	Maintenance cost
	Public perception "it's just land"
	It's a great place to walk your dog
	When is heathland not heathland / becomes woodland
	Rarer than rainforest
Short of volunteers in some places	
Opportunities	To link together
	Citizen's science
	Conservation volunteering
	Geo fencing (GIS) - Belted Galloways [cattle]
	Heathland Connections Project (Natural England)
	Management including of recreation

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	Better bike tracks
	<u>Education - people don't love it / underrated / and understand it.</u>
	Different audiences
Threats / Barriers	<u>High level of visitors</u>
	Wild fires
	Development
	Recreational activities: biking, walking
	Deer population - size of it
	Lack of funding

PARKS, GOLF COURSES, SCHOOL GROUNDS, HEALTH, HIGHER EDUCATION, BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

Strengths	Lots of nature and green space
	Makes business sense to work with nature eg no mow
	Potential for green roofs / green power PV [photo voltaic]
	Could use buildings more for animal homes eg bird boxes, insect homes. Could link to places like 'Men in Sheds' to make these.
	To have quieter places for wildlife eg exclusive golf course.
	Pubs, churches, private gardens, hotels and racecourses [could be included in this category]
Weaknesses	Lack of enforcement resource @ LPA [local planning authority]
	Government change - policy change
	<u>Traditional approaches to horticulture - weeds / untidy</u>
	Short-term grants based incentives. Need long-term incentives
	Diversity of priorities by owners
Opportunities	To enhance what they have for biodiversity [and] water management
	To engage with land managers - find out what they want eg BNG
	To work with Britain in Bloom
	To work with local community eg golf course allowing more access
	<u>Connectivity</u>
	Improving access in parks eg step free
	Circular economy - reuse, recycle
	Examples in Surrey [for access] eg Newlands Corner
	Development that meets local needs and fits into area
	Tying messages together - benefits for nature, health, climate - to land / business managers
Business champion / community leader. Best of business examples / for inspiration	
Threats / Barriers	Development - BNG - resources
	Climate change - unknown future
	Lack of funding / access to grants etc
	Lack of knowledge in local communities
	Inertia tomorrow from linear to circular economy
	Maintenance / contractors - contracts they have

	Astroturf - and too much hard standing
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WATERWAYS AND WETLAND

Strengths	A lot of it
	Enhance biodiversity, control access via ground conditions - boardwalks
	Last refuge of rare species ie dragon flies
	Corridors across the planet for plants and animals - encourage migration
	Catchment Management Partnership - River Mole, Wey and Thames
	People interested in monitoring and getting involved
	Flood management and storage
	Very rare low wetlands eg Shalford and Thusley
	Chalk streams, winterbourne streams and springs
	Healthy rivers / wetlands store carbon
Weaknesses	Complexity of management - landowners and Environment Agency
	Over engineering of waterways - straightening them and speeding the flow
	Lack of monitoring and enforcement
	Removal of enforcement powers from Environment Agency - give the EA its enforcement powers back
	Privatised water company no longer fit for purpose
Opportunities	Flood reduction / water storage
	Biodiversity
	Social
	Transport - natural connections for nature
	Re-engineer waterways to slow flows, allow better storage and create wetlands
	Mitigate run-off / pollution
	Public engagement - local education around nature recovery
	Recreation use leading to greater interest in water quality
	To increase targeted access to and along waterways and lakes - improve boardwalks to control access
	To create new reservoirs for wildlife and people
	Business to be engaged that need water to produce things eg recreational
	Education - pond dipping etc
	Opportunities for fisheries, watercress, otters, beavers and water voles
Farm ponds and garden ponds	
Threats / Barriers	Pollution - sewage, litter, agricultural run-off, dogs (turbulence, chemicals)
	Over extraction
	Non native invasive species - American cray fish, Himalayan balsam, mink, terrapins, mirror carp
	Development in the flood plain
	Airports

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WOODLAND

Strengths	<u>Lots, diverse types, more deciduous</u>
	People respond well to woodland
	Association with wellbeing
	<u>Support crafts and products - heritage, local markets</u>
	Cooler environment
	Encourages birds and animals
	Offset cost of management by economic gain
	Tree wardens
Weaknesses	Lack of equal access ie Spelthorne
	Open to green washing
	Public perception of trees as always good
	Access for disabled / pushchairs
	Huge cost for local council (roots)
	Fragmentation - too many problems
	TPO restrictive
	<u>Lack of resources to manage downside - local responses</u>
No baseline data about woodland condition (private woodland)	
Opportunities	Plant more - right type
	<u>Management - improve quality</u>
	Reduce flood threat
	Social benefit - identify areas
	<u>Connectivity of woods / hedges</u>
	Community orchards
	Urban trees / forests
	Deer management (1/2) venison
	<u>Scrub? Opportunities for surveying.</u>
	Leave fallen trees
	Local engagement for tree care
	Education about management
Threats / Barriers	Cost of management
	Deer, Deer
	Ash die back, more diseases (institutional overreaction)
	Drought / climate change
	Wild fire
	Soil compaction
	Air pollution
	Poor management - [unreadable] survival
	Over maintenance - tree in right place
	Importing
	Neatness and tidiness
	French [?] pheasants

FARMLAND INCLUDING HEDGEROWS AND FIELD MARGINS

Strengths	Clarkson's Farm
	Future of Farming events (Plumpton). Very clued up. CLA
	<u>Scale projects / effect at scale</u>
	Knepp, Wild Kenhill
	Farming clusters within an area acting together ie for hedgerows
	Groundswell - Regenerative Farming Conference
	<u>Hedgerows - wildlife corridors</u>
	Soil protection / improvement
	Flood mitigation / drainage
	Species mix - wild service etc
	Hedges contribute to visual beauty
	Foraging for blackberries etc
	Food for wild birds
	Parish boundary hedgerows are really old and so soil may not have been disturbed for 100s of years
Heritage of hedgelaying / traditional styles	
Weaknesses	So much wastage - food
	Advice to farmers is from seed and chemical industry
	Old habits / risk averse
	Modern education isn't reaching older farmers
	Lack of understanding of Biodiversity Net Gain and 30 years [leases].
	Knowledge gap
	Lack of powers or not using the powers we do have
	Doesn't include equine / horsiculture - overlooked
	Current practice of hedge trimming / annual flailing
	Contract hedge maintenance
Seen as a cost rather than a benefit	
Opportunities	<u>Engagement / education about Nature Recovery and Biodiversity</u>
	<u>Reconciling food production with biodiversity. Win, win, not win, lose.</u>
	Regenerative farming
	Organic farming
	Celebrity / peer to peer promotion
	No till cultivation
	Involve agricultural educators ie Merrist Wood
	Staggering / coordinating hedge management ie every three years
	Changing regulations and subsidy - post Brexit
	Dead hedges
	Change hedge management - let grow back to 'optimum' size
Reinstating hedges	

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	Including mix including elm [and other] native species
	Replacing / leaving stands ie oak
	Increasing complexity ie a bank and seeding with wildflowers - along margins 6-8 metres
	<u>Engage with landowners & farmers - particularly "influencers" ie LEAF - champions</u>
	Hedges may lend themselves to controlling grazing
	Framing hedges with verges
	Make it fashionable - include in gardens
Threats / Barriers	Changing regulations and subsidy - post Brexit
	Neat and tidy
	Can be lost to development or SANG
	Potential mono-culture
	Losing pollinators
	Soil - only 60 harvests left
	Inappropriate use of pesticides
	Public access to farmland
	Inheritance tax - BNG 30 years [lease]
	Niche groups might give wrong impression
	<u>Economics of farming</u>
	Lack of training for rural contractors
	Dog mess / dog behaviour impact on ground nesting birds
	Grubbing out hedgerows
	Planting non-native species ie laurel etc
	Dutch elm disease - grubbing out
	<u>Farmers remove themselves from the scheme [LNRS]</u>
	Provenance of introduced species
	Health and safety and highways management . Needs addressing - engage with them [including hedge management contractors]
Silviculture in fields and hedgerows	

SPECIES RICH GRASSLAND

Strengths	Designated sites
	Multi-habitats - orchards, grassland
	Network for small sites can make [a] difference
	Accessible - don't want to lose wildflower meadows
	Blue Heart verges - public engagement
Weaknesses	<u>Address gaps - low knowledge of grassland</u>
	Lack of protection
	People don't understand values
	Ground nesting birds - disturbance
	public perception negative eg ticks
	Gap in people's knowledge

	30 ha [hectares?]
	Lack of infrastructure for meadow establishment - seed sources etc
Opportunities	Local biodiversity audits
	To enhance what they have for biodiversity [and] water management
	Space for nature - ID grassland
	Less mowing of margins
	Adjust mowing [for] reptiles - quick to create
	Churchyards
	Grazing
	<u>Education opportunity for young people</u>
	Rangers
	Local knowledge and establishments - people value it (flowers/ not grass!)
	Local collection of seeds
	Greater access for people low cost
	Community engagement
	Publicise success, Haslemere
Threats / Barriers	Abandoned grassland scrubs over - labour intensive management
	Development - open space
	Poor grazing practices
	Pesticide and herbicide use
	Recreation pressure (BBQs)
	Legislation around seed sharing
	Overzealous cutting - extension of gardens
	Nitrogen - too much
Poor machinery use - cut and collect	

DEVELOPING NATURE RECOVERY OUTCOMES (GROUP ACTIVITY)

Following lunch, participants were asked to select a high priority from the morning's activities to explore in more depth and to identify priority outcomes and actions that could be taken forward into the strategy. The following are the results:

TOPIC: INCREASING UNDERSTANDING OF THE SOCIAL BENEFITS OF NATURE

Outcomes	Actions
<p>Improve mental and physical wellbeing, specifically addressing Eco anxiety</p> <p>Increase wellbeing of the local community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Social prescribing to reduce anxiety • School trips to natural areas (also for community groups) • Connecting people who need support with green providers (Forest bathing etc) • Mico interventions in schools & community groups • Use examples of lived experience to demonstrate success
<p>Improve knowledge of the local history of the natural environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread knowledge of environment to local community groups

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Outcomes	Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate into primary curriculum • Guided social history tours by volunteers
More sites available for specific interest groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase accessibility for disabled people (champions of the nature cause) • Spread the word about nature projects • Make access easier to nature sites (footpaths, boardwalks, languages, hearing loops etc) • Employ skilled leaders or skilled volunteers • Provide transport to places of interest

TOPIC: EDUCATE PEOPLE ABOUT/ MANAGING HEATHLAND (THEY DON'T LOVE IT!)

Outcomes	Actions
<p>Raise awareness of the importance of heathlands</p> <p>Balance between use of nature and protection</p> <p>What value does heathland have in our lives</p>	<p>Educate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media campaign • Design school lesson plans & educational resources, make available to the community • U3A programmes • Guided educational walks • Better signage on site • SWT/ NT holiday and after school clubs on sites <p>Engage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporates give membership to SWT • Apprentiship schemes in habitat management & conservation • Corporate volunteering days • Volunteer ranges and guardians • Citizen science projects

RECONCILING FOOD PRODUCTION AND BIODIVERSITY

Outcomes	Actions
Increased farm biodiversity (success is improved outputs/ reduced inputs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmer led • Respect for farmers role in society • Acknowledge the diversity of farmers and farms • Define the 'what' and let farmers decide 'how' • Sensible outcome based targets • Address farmers concerns e.g. inheritance tax issues • Farm clusters are very powerful • Talk farmers language • Educate on the complexity of the system • Use Merrist Wood expertise • Agronomists not employed by agrochemical lobby

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Outcomes	Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn from past inflection points, e.g WW2 • Persuasive proposition for farmers • Create a financial case that works including credibility on BNG and its benefits for farmers • Stable policy environment • Align requirements from different government departments into 1 sensible process • Farm walks in the Weald to Wave corridor • List of contractors with good biodiversity credentials • Farmer focussed workshops to develop this strategy

ENHANCE THE BIODIVERSITY OF PUBLIC ESTATES

Outcomes	Actions
Provide plant diversity for pollinators	<p>Research to better understand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politics, conflicts, attitudes, funding, community interest and influence, sources of information, contacts <p>Stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic institutions • Places of worship • NGO's • Gardening groups, allotments, beekeepers, other species interest groups • Landowners • Council's at all levels <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map opportunities • Develop action plan • PR/ media – promote positive messages

RE-ENGINEERING WATERWAYS TO SLOW FLOW AND STORE WATER

Outcomes	Actions
Clean water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renationalising water companies • Working with landowners to increase and reconnect waterways • Working with Developers to maximise water storage • Working with golf courses to develop water management to create wetlands • Greater engagement of people with waterways • Promote examples of good practice and projects
Better connected waterways	
Less flooding and better all year supply	
Increased biodiversity	
Greater engagement of people with protection of water ways	

CONNECTIVITY OF WOODLAND

Outcomes	Actions
Well-connected areas of woodland habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping – find where the woodland areas are and condition, they are in + ownership. • Create a baseline, quality soil, biodiversity, woodland etc • Identify which are most under threat and which are easy to connect • Find out who owns bits in between • Find out what is blocking connectivity, roads, development, ownership etc • Decide on importance of hedgerow connectivity • Prioritise based on feasibility but also diversity and uniqueness • Designation of forests that require protection • Develop management plans for the connected ‘wood-scape’
More resilient woodland , with respect to pests, diseases, climate change	
Increased biodiversity of animals and plants	
Healthy woodland soils	

PRIORITIES

Each group was asked to feedback to the plenary, 1-2 most important outcomes and actions for Nature Recovery:

Topic	Outcome	Action
Educate people about managing heathland	Raising awareness of why important for biodiversity	Design school and lesson plans for groups of all ages
	Better balance between use [recreational] and protection for nature recovery	Local business more aware / engaged - volunteering
Reconcile food production and biodiversity	Stop talking about it in this way	Farmer led discussions [on] how to bring that change about
	Stop decline in biodiversity in the farmed landscape	Farm clusters [to] give mutual support
Enhance biodiversity in public estate and private spaces	Provide enough variety particularly of wildflowers to meet the needs of pollinators	Background research. Identify networks. Present

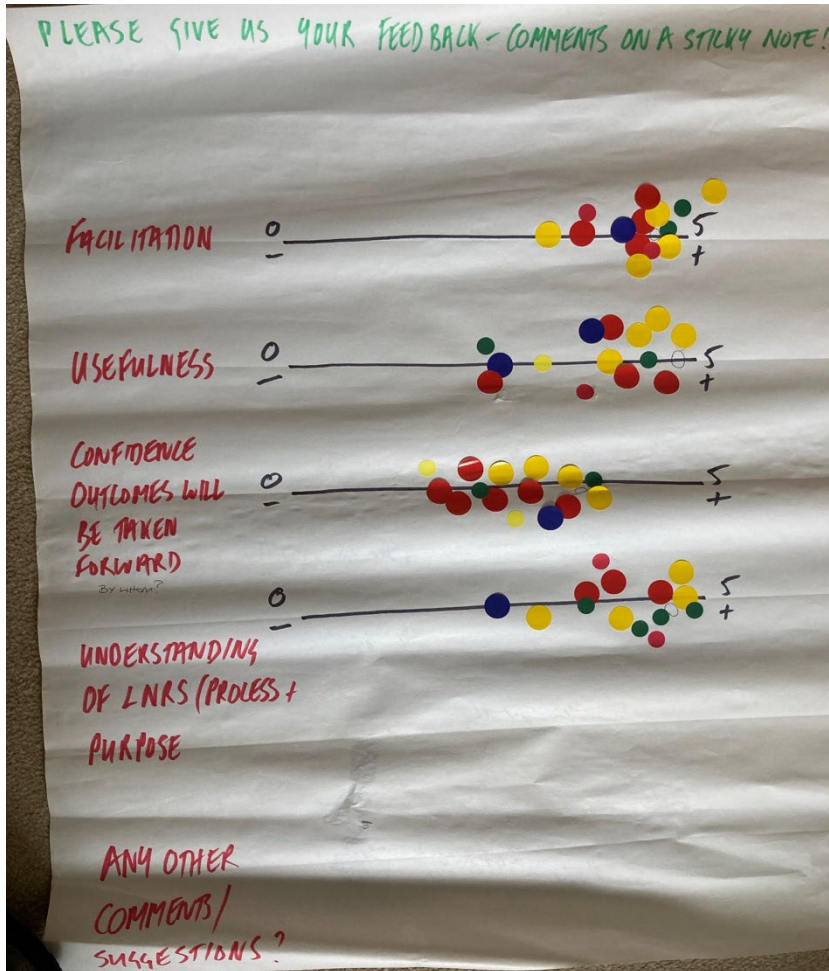
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Topic	Outcome	Action
		opportunities, funding and PR/media plan.
Increase understanding of social benefits of nature	Improve physical and mental wellbeing (barriers are transport and accessibility)	School and community group trips to natural areas. Use peoples lived experience to breed more success.
Change hedge management	[Managed and retained hedges]	Kite mark / quality [standards] for contractors
Slow the flow / store water	Better connected waterways	Landowner water management cluster
	Less flooding	
	Better water supply	
Woodland connectivity	Have a more connected woodland within and outside Surrey borders	Data gathering – location and quality. Rare species and ownership. Prioritise where to put the effort in

END MATTERS

EVALUATION

Participants were asked to score the following out of 5 (with 5 being very good):



- Access needs on Eventbrite booking form
- Difficult to hear speaker that had a soft voice (Adam). Also while he was speaking another facilitator (Jim) was busy writing up charts using noisy pens which made it difficult to hear
- Simpler to order a veggie lunch for everyone. In line with climate responsibilities
- Label the food as to what it is
- For the workshop the group title needed to be on the page as well as the post-it notes
- Needed a bit more facilitators help with the afternoon session like in the morning, as at times a confusing task
- Brilliant opportunity to meet others
- Invite only not helpful and confusing when on Evenbrite. With invite only lots of groups will get left out of process

JARGON

In an attempt to reduce and / or explain jargon, the following were recorded on a flip sheet with explanations during the course of the workshop. These will again be used to populate a “jargon buster” or glossary on the website:

- Natural capital - value given to nature services £
- Ecosystem services - services provided by nature

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- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) an obligation on development either on / off site to provide new [biodiversity] resources [spaces]
- National Landscape - new name for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

The event finished at 4pm.

Jim Boot and Mike King, Senior Consultants 2nd July, 2024